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Beyond Dallas

Review by ROBERT BONAZZI

ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT by Sylvia Meagher
Bobbs-Merrill Company; 476 pages; \$8.50

OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS by Harold Weisberg
Canyon Books (New York City); 404 pages; 95¢

FORGIVE MY GRIEF, II by Penn Jones, Jr.
The Mirror (Midlothian, Texas); 196 pages; \$3.00

There are presently four schools of thought on the assassination of John F. Kennedy. There are those who do not care, there are those who believe the version set forth by *The Warren Report*, there are those who think the *Report* is a sham, and finally, there are those that *know* the *Report* is an utter whitewash and think New Orleans' District Attorney Jim Garrison can prove it in court.

A handful of books has been written in favor of the report, but many, many more (and these being much more convincing) have been written criticizing the Commission's investigation. Among these, come three new books, all authored by competent experts on the assassination.

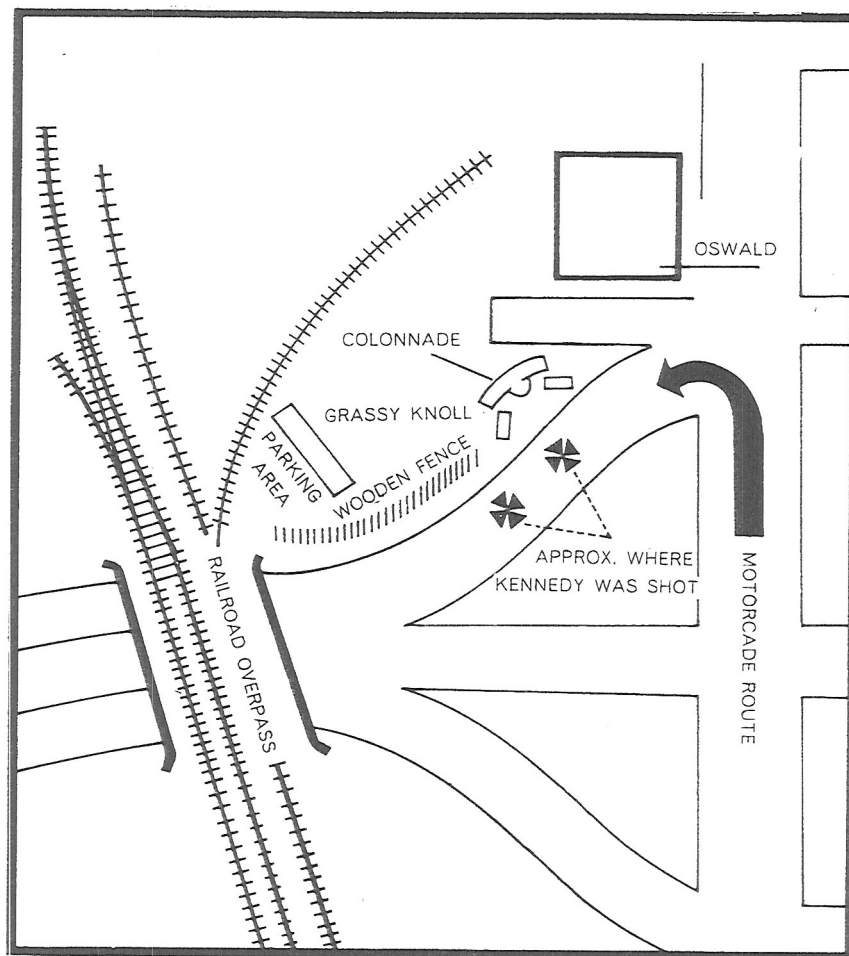
Sylvia Meagher's *ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT* is the longest and most comprehensive, and does, as the reviews have mentioned, "come closest to being the reference book on the subject." It is the likely successor to Mark Lane's bestseller, *RUSH*

TO JUDGEMENT, in its effort to scrutinize the Commission's case point for point. Miss Meagher's research, aided by time, is certainly more provocative and accurately detailed than Lane's, but her style, devoid of Lane's wit, is sometimes plodding. But one must remember that this is a question that depends on minutia: the answers are somewhere in that maze of Twenty-Six volumes of *Hearings & Exhibits*—or at least the clues to the answers are there. Certainly the case is not closed (even 70% of Americans polled doubt the *Report* now) and the *Truth* of the matter is still being contended.

Sylvia Meagher's new book is important evidence for those skeptical Americans. *ACCESSORIES* is a totally effective and almost final broadsheet against the government's best seller. Not only does this book rediscuss the controversy over the magic bullet (here reduced to absurdity), but new evidence concerning phony secret service agents in and around the Book Depository building On the day of Kennedy's murder, no secret service agents were assigned to that area and yet at least three witnesses said they talked with men who either called themselves agents or produced credentials to that effect.

The basic difference between *ACCESSORIES* and the books by Harold Weisberg and Penn Jones, Jr. is that the later critics are in direct communication and accordance with the investigation of District Attorney Jim Garrison. Weisberg's book (his third in a series of *WHITEWASH* books) is even donned with a Foreword by Garrison.

Weisberg's work in *OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS* is primarily interconnecting evidence of the CIA's complicity in the murder of President Kennedy. Like Garrison, he feels the plot was controlled from New Orleans and later hatched in Dallas. This book deals with the underworld (and Weisberg has been to New Orleans and brushed with them) that moved about Oswald, Ferrie, Novel and other suspected conspirators. Weisberg has wisely abandoned academic criticisms of the *Report*. He has done a thorough job of denying the Commission any footing in his earlier books and now has moved to the streets to find the outcome of his researched leads. His book is, without criticism of Miss Meagher, an extension of her work, *ACCESSORIES* is a primer almost, but it is also an ending: it is the point at which academia ends and footwork must be-



gin. Her hope is that a new investigative body will be formed. Weisberg has no such hopes, but he does feel that Garrison is right and he has joined with many other critics in aiding the District Attorney. Sylvia Meagher, on the other hand, dismisses Garrison in two pages of her huge book. One wonders who she expects will take it from here.

The contributions of Penn Jones, Jr. (in both volumes of *FORGIVE MY GRIEF*) are numerous. Jones was probably the first skeptic on the scene. Since that time he has been a vital information center in Midlothian, Texas (25 miles south of Dallas) for every major critic of the *Report*. Jones' most significant work is his investigation and cataloging of mysterious deaths surrounding the post-assassination matrix. In his second volume of *GRIEF*, Jones counts 24 mysterious deaths, including such principals as Ferrie and Jack Ruby, and some not so principal, such as Gary Underhill (a CIA agent),

William Whaley (cab driver who transported Oswald on that day) and Oswald's housekeeper, Earline Roberts. His investigations into these deaths is accurate and very frightening. He even makes a convincing case for Dorothy Kilgallen's *accidental* death—he feels it was not an accident and that it is connected with the conspiracy because of what Miss Kilgallen knew from talking in private conference with Jack Ruby.

Jones' book is introduced by literary historian Maxwell Geismar and blessed with a cover sketch by Elaine DeKooning.

Jones, like Weisberg, is solidly behind Garrison's case and both feel that there is nothing left but dust to be shuffled in the Commission's *REPORT* and *HEARINGS & EXHIBITS*. The real earth is hiding the *Truth* beyond Dallas. It will take shovels and not book markers and footnotes to find the deepest answers.